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Chapter I

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

182 THE Mandan social organization was complex and highly integrated. There is an abundance of archeological evidence that at a very early time the population was more widely dispersed along the Missouri River. La Verendrye, the first known visitor to this tribe, reported that they were residing in six villages which were fortified with closely grouped lodges. Considering the depth of refuse of the protohistoric village sites of the Heart River region, all which have closely grouped lodges within a fortification, it is evident that the Mandan village groups had lived in intimate contacts with each other for two or more centuries.

621 361 Each village was an economic unit. It acted as a unit when leaving on the summer buffalo hunt, although there was a certain amount of co-operation among villages in the matter of protecting the old people left behind and in keeping enemy raiding parties from burning the lodges during their absence. Each village had its garden section which was separate from other village garden areas, although my informants claimed that at one time just preceding the first smallpox epidemic, when the Boley, Scattered, Motsiff, and Slant villages of the west side and Round Lodges and Yellow Earth villages of the east side were occupied, all the available corn grounds were planted and that it was necessary for the villages to meet in council to define the garden limits of each village. At that time the most distant villages of the Heart River region were only a few miles from each other, and some families had gardens on opposite sides of the river. A village was frequently abandoned by a part of the people whenever wood was depleted or the corn ground was no longer productive, which in large measure accounts for the presence of so many village sites showing short occupation. At the mouth of the Heart River where the wooded bottoms were most extensive, the villages show longest continuous occupation.

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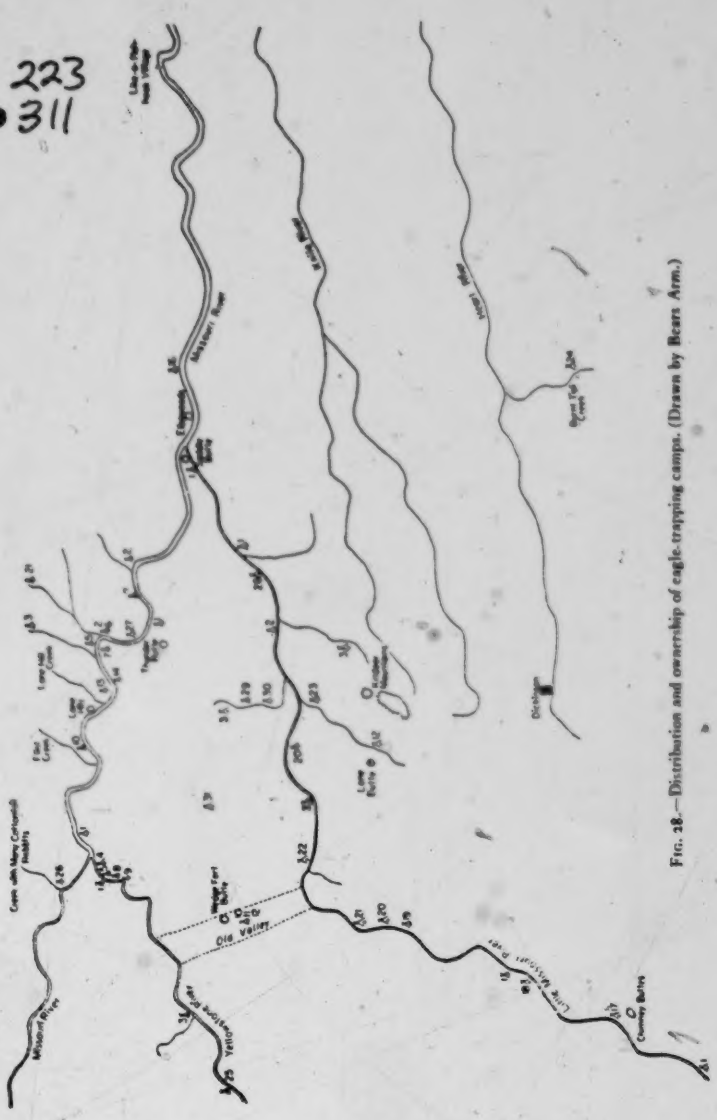

FIG. 28.—Distribution and ownership of eagle-trapping camps. (Drawn by Bears Arm.)

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KEY TO FIGURE 28

OWNERS OF EAGLE-TRAPPING CAMPS, THEIR TRIBE AND CLAN

1, Iron Eyes, Mandan, WaxikEna; *2*, Small Ankles, Hidatsa, Water-buster; *3*, Belly Up, Hidatsa, AwaxEnawita; *4*, Little Shield, Mandan, WaxikEna; *5*, Brave, Hidatsa, AwaxEnawita; *6*, Four Bears, Hidatsa, Water-buster; *7*, Guts, Hidatsa, Maxoxati; *8*, Bad Buffalo, Mandan, Prairie Chicken; *9*, Old Black Bear, Hidatsa, AwaxEnawita; *10*, Poor Wolf, Hidatsa, Water-buster; *11*, Good Bear, Hidatsa, Water-buster; *12*, Good Walker, Hidatsa, Water-buster; *13*, Crows Paunch, Hidatsa, Prairie Chicken; *14*, Enemy Dog, Mandan, WaxikEna; *15*, Cedar, Mandan, WaxikEna; *16*, Road Maker, Hidatsa, Water-buster; *17*, Hairy Coat, Hidatsa, Water-buster; *18*, Raven Wing, Hidatsa, Water-buster; *19*, Plain Tail (Big Coat), Hidatsa, Low Hat; *20*, Bad Coat, Hidatsa, Maxoxati; *21*, Old Bear, Mandan, WaxikEna; *22*, Wolf Eyes, Hidatsa, Maxoxati; *23*, His Horse Smells Him, Hidatsa, Maxoxati; *24*, Red Basket, Mandan, Prairie Chicken; *25*, Runs, Hidatsa (clan not known); *26*, Coyote, Hidatsa, Prairie Chicken; *27*, Bears Tail, Hidatsa, Prairie Chicken; *28*, Little Coyote (he would come up from Awaxawi Village at Knife River to trap here; this is probably a mythological camp); *29*, Bad Robe, Mandan, Tamisik; *30*, Bears Foot, Mandan (clan not known); *31*, Makes Everything Good, Hidatsa, Prairie Chicken.